FIMBRISTYLIS NARAYANII C. E. C. FISCHER--A NEW RECORD FROM NORTH WEST HIMALAYA

In a general study of the Cyperaceae material in this herbarium (BSD) a specimen (*Naithani* 41987), named *Fimbristylis tenera* R. & S. caught my attention. This species has filiform leaves, spirally disposed glumes with prominent and strongly incurved keels, ellipsoid or oblong-ellipsoid spikelets and the nut globose obovoid. None of these characters were present in the specimen in hand; on the other hand, a critical study showed its leaves ensiform; glumes distichous below and spirally disposed above; spikelets lanceolate, the nut obpyramidal, truncate and trigonus—all characters fitting *Fimbristylis narayanii* C. E. C. Fischer, a species described from the far south: Travancore and Madras (i.e. Kerala and Tamilnadu). The tentative new identification was confirmed by a comparison with a paratype specimen, *M. Rama Rao* 1515 (CAL) which incidentally had recently gone through the critical appraisal of the cyperologist J. H. Kern. This finding establishes the occurrence of this rare species in the North West Himalaya. Very likely it occurs elsewhere too, and to facilitate identification a detailed description is here provided.

Fimbristylis narayanii C. E. C. Fischer in Kew Bull.- 1931: 46. 1931 & in Gamble Fl. Mad. 3: 1660. 1931.

Erect, annual, caespitose *herb* up to 17 cm; *stem* slender, obtusely quadrangular; *leaves* narrowly ensiform, 4-8 cm long, 1-1.5 mm broad; *spikelets* in simple terminal umbels, lanceolate, 5-9 mm long; bracts 1 to each ray; glumes distichous below, the upper ones spiral, broadly triangular, subacute, glabrous or slightly scabrid, 2-3.5 mm long, *ca* 2 mm broad, pale brown; keel obscure; stamens 3; style 3-fid; *nut* white, trigonus, obpyramidal, truncate, tubercled, 0.5-1 mm long.

Common near water courses; flowering and fruiting, October.

UTTAR PRADESH: Chamoli district, Mondal area, 1650 m, *B. D. Naithani* 41987 (BSD).

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PRELIMINARY NOTES ON ETHNOBOTANY OF SINGHBHUM DISTRICT, BIHAR.

INTRODUCTION

From pre-historic time human culture has been influenced directly or indirectly by the plant kingdom. It is an accepted fact that the modern civilisation is developed only due to this influence throughout the ages. So, it is high time to exploit the empiric knowledge about the plant wealth that the aboriginal people are retaining as tradition by vocal means only. The study of the influence of the vegetation on their culture is the main aim of ethnobotany which can bring into light the new or additional information about the plant wealth.

AREA OF WORK

There is a mythological belief that the name of the district Singhbhum has been derived from "Sing Bonga" (Sun-God)—a principal deity of "Ho's" whom they regard as the Creator of Universe,

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The district is situated approximately between Lat. 21°58′ N and 85°-86° 54′ E. It is bounded on the north by the district of Ranchi and Purulia, on the east by Midnapore, on the south by Mayurbhanj, on the west Sundargarh. This district is chosen for ethnobotanical study, because it represents south eastern portion of Chhotanagpur division where tribal people are concentrated. Two-third of the total population of this district is being inhabited chiefly by aboriginals. Among them the tribe "Ho" is predominent. They are believed to have migrated from Chhotanagpur plateau and have overcome the Bhuiyas. It is also believed that they are connected with the aboriginals of Australia and have come here when Madagascar was connected with India by land. Possibly the term "Ho" has been derived from *Horo* i.e. man of fighting.

Their unwritten language is a dialect of Mundari group but differs in certain words, grammer and in vocabulary. But it is very rich in words used in village and jungle life.

There is no recent botanical or ethnobotanical account of this district except the work of Haines. The present paper is the preliminary ethnobotanical account of the district. The chief aim of this work is to find out the uses made of the plants by the "Hos" for various purposes, *viz.* food, medicine, fibre, fuel, shelter, dyes, narcotic oil seeds and other material culture.

The authors first tried to discover the names locally given to the plants and the corresponding scientific names, for scientific investigations and noted the uses of the plants which were reported in the fields. For convenience, special letters and diacritical marks have been avoided in this paper. The botanical names of the plants are arranged alphabetically which is followed by families, local names and the locality from where these informations were collected. The detailed description of the species are excluded here as these are available in published floras.

The following abbreviations are used.
H = Ho ; Loc. = Locality.

Antidesma diandrum Roth (Euphorbiaceae).
Matta-ara (H).
Loc.: Jhicpani, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7704.
The young leaf powder both raw and cooked is eaten as curry, with rice. It is sour in taste and is sold in local market @ 10 paise for 100 gms. The leaf contains vitamin B Complex. "The plant is sour in taste due to presence of Tartaric Acid" (*Rai Chaudhuri et al.* 1977).

Carica papaya L. (Caricaceae).
Papita-daru (H).
Loc.: Mahaharpur, *Pal & Srivastava* 7804.
If there is any fracture in the body, the affected portion is massaged with the heated leaf of the red-variety of the plant first. A paste of (H. Bind-gum) *Vanda parviflora* Lindl. and (H. Kungar) *Dendrophthoe falcata* (L. f.) Ettings. is applied on the broken part and tied with the leaf of this plant after slightly heating. Simultaneously (H. Binga-Kongar) *Tinospora malabarica* Miers. is prescribed to take orally for three days.

Carissa spinarum L. (Apocynaceae).
Gara-asur (H).
Loc. Hatgâmari, *Pal & Srivastava.* 7712.
The root paste with cold water is prescribed orally in fever. The paste is also used in inflamation, in cut injury and in body pain. Before application of the paste, it is slightly warmed. The odour of the root is some what like that of (H. Tea-bar, Anal patta) *Hemidesmus indicus* Br.

Colastrus paniculata Willd. (Celastraceae).
Kujri-daru ; Malkan-gui (H).
Loc.: Hatgamari, *Pal & Srivastava* 7719.
The extracted oil from the powder of the seeds is used as hair oil. It is also used in scabies, body pain and in cut wounds. The oil is generally extracted by boiling.

Croton oblongifolius Roxb. (Euphorbiaceae).

Kuti-kun-jaw (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava* 7747.

The root paste is prescribed in constipation. Small quantity of root bark is given orally in stomach trouble.

Curcuma laucorhiza Roxb. (Zingiberaceae).

Paro-red (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7744.

The paste of the rhizome is given in enlargement of spleen and liver. It is also prescribed for ulceration in stomach.

Elephantopus scaber L. (Compositae).

Asma-ri-red (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava* 7746.

The paste of the root and leaf along with *Handia* (a kind of country liquor) is prescribed in dropsy.

Emilia sonchifolia DC. (Compositae).

Buang-dumbo (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7748.

The juice of the root along with cold water and common salt, is given in redness of the eye and to cure cataract.

Eulaliopsis binata (Retz.) C. E. Hubb. (Poaceae) syn. *Pollinidium angustifolium* (Trin.) Haines.

Badh-cofma (H).

Loc.: Bora-torta, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7727.

The grass is locally used for making string, rope etc.

"Ho" reported that cattle do not like it.

Hamiltonia suaveolens Roxb. (Rubiaceae).

Sarkapi-red (H).

Loc.: Hatgamari, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7720.

The root paste is prescribed in ulcer and wound. The precaution should be taken so that ulcer does not come in contact with water.

Hibiscus cancellatus Roxb. (Malvaceae).

Dama-danda-jata (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava* 7728.

The dried black seeds are eaten raw, like (Chana) *Cicer arietinum* L.

The white pith of the tubers are also eaten raw.

Indigofera pulchella Roxb. var. **pulchella** (Papilionaceae).

Eater-jata (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7745.

The red flowers are eaten as vegetable after cooking. It is sold in the local market.

Lathyrus aphaca L. (Papilionaceae).

Kesari-falgal (H).

Loc.: Tungli, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7800.

The raw and boiled seeds are eaten. According to Ho it is sweet in taste.

Leonotis nepetaefolia Br. (Labiatae).

Pogu-jata (H).

Loc.: Borotorta, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7723.

The flowers are sucked by the children for nectar. The crushed seeds are soaked in water and applied on mother's swollen breasts.

Ocimum basilicum L. (Labiatae).

Achi-koam (H).

Loc.: Tungli, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7799.

The paste of the inflorescence and rasun (*Allium sativum* L.) are applied in sore.

Olax scandens Roxb. (Olacaceae).

Rimilbiri-ara ; Jurbili-daru (H).

Loc.: Hatgamari, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7718.

The young leaves and twigs are fried with oil and taken as Sak.

Phoenix humilis Royle (Palmae).

Seta-ba-te-ted (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7743.

The root paste is applied on sprains of legs. It increases the appetite. It is extensively used for thatching and for mat.

Polygonum barbatum L. (Polygonaceae).

Gara-bera-aha (H).

Loc.: Kharban, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7749.

The young twigs are eaten both raw and cooked.

Salmalia malabarica Schott. & Endl. (Bombacaceae)

Mur-red (H).

Loc.: Tungli, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7798.

A preparation of the pith of root and (H. Godle-red) *Nymphaea nauchali* Burm. f. is applied like burnol to cure any burning wound.

Schleichera trijuga Willd. (Sapindaceae).
Baru-ja (H).
Loc.: Borotorta, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7726.

The aril and kernel of the fruits are eaten. The young twigs are also eaten. The seed oil is very good as cooking media. It is also used as hair oil and for the treatment of skin diseases. Same uses have been reported by (Haines; Bressers 1961, 1951).

Schrebera swietenioides Roxb. (Oleaceae).
Sandap-sing (H).
Loc.: Monogarpur, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7819.

The fruits and barks of the plant are used in hydrocela.

Vangueria pubescens Kurz. (Rubiaceae).
Serali-daru (H).
Loc.: Jhicpani, *Pal & Srivastava,* 7705.

The green leaf is eaten as vegetable after cooking with rice. The powder of the same is sold in the market @ 15 p. per 100 gm.

The leaf contains protein 3.1% and calcium 1.71% (*Rai Chaudhuri et al.* 1977).

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